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# SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR,

HIS HONOR THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR,

AND THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE

LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

MAY 27, 1812,

BEING THE

*DAY OF ANNUAL ELECTION.*

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BY EDMUND FOSTER, A. M.  
Congregational Minister at Littleton.

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1812.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.**

*In House of Representatives, May 28, 1842.*

*Ordered,* That the Rev. Messrs. LELAND, STEVENS, and TINKHAM, be a committee to wait on the Rev. EDMUND FOSTER, A. M. and, in the name of the House, to thank him for the Discourse delivered yesterday, before his Excellency the Governor, his Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the Honorable Council, and the two branches of the General Court, and to request of him a copy for the press.

*Attest,*

**BENJAMIN POLLARD,** *Clerk.*

## SERMON, &c.

AS the constituted authorities of this Commonwealth are now assembled in this house, to bow before the altar of God, to worship and receive instruction from him, before they enter on the duties of the present year, I have chosen for the theme of discourse before them, the words recorded in

1 Cor. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21.

*But now hath God set the members every one in the body as it hath pleased him.*

*And if they were all one member, where were the body?*

*But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

*And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

There is no better method of illustrating any subject, and fixing it on the mind, than by those metaphors and lively images in which language and nature abound. An example of this kind we have now before us.

The text properly describes the Christian church in unity with itself, but may be lawfully appropriated to a civil community. A body politic may fitly be compared to the natural body which is fearfully and wonderfully made. What is true of the one is true of the other. There are many members subsisting in one body by a mutual connection and dependence among themselves. And though all the members have not the same office, yet they are all necessary in the connection and order in which they are placed to constitute it a perfect body, whose energy and support are within itself. Further to illustrate and improve this subject, will be the business of the following discourse. The natural body is the work of God, and animated by his breath; a body

politic is formed by the wisdom and contrivance of man, and when organized and fitted for life and action, is owned and sanctioned by the Almighty as his ordinance.

The necessity of civil government is founded in the weakness and wants of man existing in a private capacity. Men are insufficient to their own wants, and feel a mutual dependence on each other for protection and happiness. These enjoyments can be secured only by associating together for the promotion of a common interest. A body fitly joined together, and strengthened by a union of all its members, can minister to its own necessities, and is prepared for its own defence.

The origin of government is of most ancient date; and has existed under different forms according to the will and power of an individual; or the advice and consent of the whole. It was at first patriarchal. It has since been military, kingly, aristocratic, and republican. Order is the will of God, and the law of heaven; and therefore every government, lawfully established, is the ordinance of God, though the form be not prescribed by himself. He has left this subject to the wisdom and discretion of men to vary according to the inclination, genius and character of a people.

The government of this Commonwealth originated in a voluntary association of the citizens. On this basis the people devised and established a constitution to direct their legislators in the discharge of their duty. It designates the branches of the government, defines their powers, and the better to guard the rights of the people from encroachment, and prevent the enactment of arbitrary and oppressive laws, it gives to each branch a check on the others. Each branch of the government is filled annually by the people. By an expression of the public sentiment and will, we take private citizens, and advance them to the head of the body politic, that they who are esteemed greatest among us, may become the servants of all. We set the members in the body as it pleaseth us.

When making this provision for our future safety and happiness, the framers of our excellent constitution had all the ancient forms of government to select from, and they were wisely directed in their choice. The form adopted is the most congenial with the views and feelings of an enlightened people, who have a consciousness that they were born free, and a desire to live so. The wisdom and benevolence displayed in our present form of government have been tested by experience, and they excite our gratitude to the wise and patriotic framers of it.

For their correct views and principles of civil government, the diffusion of them among the inhabitants of this land, and the unanimity with which they were adopted and maintained, the people were much indebted to the time in which they were called to this important work, and to the friendly disposition which then prevailed among them. Their recent sufferings and success in the cause of freedom, united them in the work of self-preservation. They were uncorrupted by ambition. To party views and feelings they were mostly strangers, and they sought not every one his own, but every man another's good.

At that period also the public mind was tranquil, the judgment cool and deliberate, and the feelings benevolent and patriotic. They were alive to their duty and true interests; and the plans they adopted in these happy moments formed the basis on which was to stand secure a nation free and happy.

Owing to that one spirit and soul which actuated a great and free people, similar forms of government were adopted throughout the States in America. All that had been done was excellent, but did not go far enough to meet the views of a people whose interest was to be one, and indivisible. In politics as in other sciences, one improvement leads to another. The same causes which induced individuals within certain limits to form themselves into bodies politic, or independent States, led the same States to form a Federal Union, and thus to become the pillars on which a national government should rest

for its support. Its original boundaries have been, and possibly may be further enlarged by the admission of new territories and states into the Union. The experiment is making to what extent a federal republic can be carried.

The structure of the whole is formed on the same model, as that of its parts. The principles, materials, and builders are the same. We have here also set the members every one in the body as it hath pleased us. The plan is noble, the work is sublime. Wisdom hath builded her house, she has hewn her several pillars on which it stands, and she has consecrated it the temple of liberty. To preserve the union of all the parts, and give strength to the whole edifice, is the duty of every citizen, and of every state composing the American nation.

We owe our first duties to this Commonwealth, consisting of many members, yet but one body. The works of man are ever the most perfect when they have for their pattern the works of God. The human frame exhibits to us that system, order and union which should be found in a body politic. What is necessary to an individual is also necessary to a people who have associated together to secure and augment the blessings of life. As the basis of public happiness, we possess a good constitution, which, if faithfully preserved and administered upon, promises length of days, with increasing prosperity. These blessings can no otherwise be enjoyed than by the members understanding the relation they bear to each other, and by every one's performing the proper duties of his station. In a body thus fitly joined together, the happiness of individuals and of the community, are closely connected. The true interests of those who govern can never be separated from those who are governed. A union between the members and the head, is necessary to the existence and prosperity of the whole body. To preserve this union, wisdom and benevolence, truth and justice, virtue and patriotism should be seated in the head, and communicated to the members. The diffusion of these principles, will impart health and vigor to the whole body.



Men elevated to the office of legislators and constituted guardians of the rights and interests of the people hold a commanding prospect and influence over them ; and they should know that the community is interested in all the measures they adopt and pursue, and must be deeply affected by them. Let them consider by whom, and for what purposes they hold their responsible stations, and study the character and interests of their constituents.

A knowledge of human nature, of its various perfections and many defects, of those views and feelings of men, excited merely from the condition in which they are placed, of the passions and desires of persons generally, and of the springs of action in all, is a necessary qualification of good rulers.

To those who would so model the laws of society as to meet the exigences of the times, and produce pleasing and salutary effects, this branch of science is as necessary as it is for a man first to know the powers of an instrument before he can take it in his hand and play skillfully upon it. Not only a knowledge of our own constitution, and of government and laws generally, is necessary to good rulers ; but a particular acquaintance also with the genius, habits and character of the people over whom they are permitted to bear rule.

As the head is the vital part of the body, and its office is to preside over and direct the members, it should be intelligent and pure, and exert its legitimate powers for the preservation of order and harmony among them. To guard rulers against the spirit of pride, and the insolence of office, so corrupting in themselves, and so painful to be endured by others, they should remember their responsibility to God, whose ministers they are only for good, and to their constituents, who confided to them their authority in hope of deriving private and public blessings from it ; that the respect paid to them will be measured by the good services they have rendered the public, and that they themselves must share in common with others the prosperity or adversity which may result from their own measures.

These are considerations which will act on rulers in a republic with a force which cannot be felt by those whose office is hereditary and whose power is under less control. Civil rulers never appear so dignified and amiable as when they manifest a parental solicitude and kindness for the people, listen to their real grievances and complaints; correct the errors and abuses which anywhere exist, and cherish among them those principles and habits which render individuals and society respectable and happy. When men are elevated to office, it is not to separate them from the rest of the people, but to draw closer the bonds of union between the members and the head; to create a sympathy between, and a mutual dependence on each other for support and happiness, and to give rulers the power of rendering to their fellow-citizens more numerous and important services than they could possibly have done in a private station.

The public interests demand their undivided attention. Their liberal souls should not be confined to any class or portion of the community. Nothing should be exclusive which can be enjoyed by all. Life, liberty and property are equally sacred and dear to all men, and therefore claim an equal protection from the laws.

Arbitrary discriminations should be cautiously avoided. True merit and worth can never be correctly estimated by outward splendor or by rank and station in the world.

There are many noble souls in lowly cottages, and some of the excellent of the earth are to be found in the humble and peaceful walks of life. And yet how often has this great portion of the community been overlooked, misrepresented and affectedly reproached by the name of the *people*; as though they were not of the same species with ourselves; nor entitled to the rights and privileges of men and citizens, but made to subserve the ambitious views of those who may think they possess an inherent right to rule and the rest are destined to obey. Ignorance, pride and prejudice have given rise to many of the distinctions among our citizens which are kept up in the minds of men.

In our country towns and villages the people are generally sober and industrious, peaceable and benevolent, lovers of good order and of good men. Their hands more than their heads minister to their necessities.

They supply their wants by honest labor, and cheerfully contribute to the public expenses. There is more arrangement and order in their affairs, and more real good resulting from them, than is sometimes to be found in the bustle of a city, where a circulation of property is rapidly and constantly kept up without adding any thing to the original stock, and what is gain to one man is just so much loss to another. Deduct from society all the members who are in agricultural and manufacturing pursuits, and you not only withdraw from it the principal and most permanent source of its wealth; but also take away a great portion of the honesty and virtue to be found in it. There is so much merit and importance attached to this class of citizens, that one may cheerfully volunteer his services in pleading their cause, protecting their rights, and encouraging their useful labors. They are the wealth of a nation in peace; its bulwark and defence in war. If they are not the eye, they are the hands which minister to the body; if they are not the head, they are the feet and pillars which support it. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

From one portion of useful citizens our attention is invited to another. Men of opulence, liberality and patriotism can render essential services to their state and nation. When their liberal souls devise liberal things, and they devote their attention to the public good, they diffuse many blessings among their fellow men. By encouraging the genius and industry of their country; by devising and carrying into effect useful enterprises, they multiply the comforts of life, and promote the general happiness. The many public institutions enjoyed among us by the liberality of individuals, which afford an asylum for the houseless child of want, a place of refuge and succor to the stranger and the sick, do a last-

ing honor to the founders, and raise high the reputation of this Commonwealth. In all the various professions and callings among us, none are to be found that are not honorable and useful, if the duties of them be performed with correctness and fidelity ; and *no hostilities* should exist between them.

The body politic manifestly possesses ample means of support, preservation and happiness ; and if all the members would harmonize and act unitedly under the direction of the head, this Commonwealth would be strong in its own strength, remain an immoveable pillar of the Union, and bid defiance to any earthly power that dare assault it.

But as the natural body is liable to various humors and diseases, which disorder and weaken it, and which it is difficult to correct and heal ; so it is with the body politic. And if they were to convulse and dissolve it, it might not be owing so much to the want of skill and attention in those who ministered to it, as to the obstinacy of the complicated disease.

The difference of education, the prejudices which early enter into the mind and grow up with it, the almost endless variety of temper and character, sentiments and habits, interests and pursuits, to be found in a great people, render it difficult to mould and cement them in one mass. These warring elements are opposed to union, and tend to division. Therefore to regulate and govern the affairs of a republic, where the rights of all the citizens are indeed equal, but almost every thing else unequal, so as to meet the views of the people generally, and produce the greatest sum of public happiness, is an arduous work. To give contentment and satisfaction to all is impossible. The government of men will ever attempt in vain what the government of God has never yet effected.

But the want of desired success should never intimidate the public mind, weaken its energies, nor abate the ardor of pursuit.

The Almighty parent of the universe, who is good and doeth good, never ceases from guiding and govern-

ing his people on account of their ingratitude and discontent, and the disorders that spring up among them.— He steadily holds the reins, knows how to check and control the lusts and passions of men ; to cause order to grow out of confusion, and eventually to educe good from evil. Though there be many devices in men's hearts, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall stand. By his wisdom rulers should be made wise ; from his example they should learn patience, and not be weary in well doing.

As the Supreme Being provides for the instruction of the people whom he chose to govern, and as he fits them for privileges before he puts them in possession of them, the same methods should be pursued by those who are appointed to direct the civil concerns of a people.— What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

A republican government is founded on public opinion, and rests principally on the virtue and patriotism of the people for its support. It is engrafted not so much on the fears, as on the interests and affections of the people. If these remarks are true, it is apparent that an ignorant and vicious people could not long remain free. Their own vices and disorders would in time bring them into bondage.

To a discerning mind the defects and weakness of civil government, without moral and religious cultivation, is evident. For what are laws without morals ?— They may take cognizance of the overt actions of men, but can never reach and cure the moral disorders of the heart. They may impose restraints and put the body politic under strict regimen, but can never heal its internal disorders. They may also cut off from the earth *some bold and daring offenders*, and doom others to confinement. But let experience decide how seldom men are reformed and made good citizens merely by legal punishments. Their reputation is hereby lost ; they become hopeless of regaining their former character and standing in society ; and when released from confine-

ment, it may be only to gain a fresh opportunity to repeat their crimes. As it is far better to prevent crimes than to punish them; to save life than to destroy it; to pay a voluntary obedience to the rules of society, than to live under the terrors and lash of the law, let the public mind be awakened to a sense of its duty, and attentive to its own improvement and happiness.

In a government like ours, originating in the people, instead of our laws giving character to them, they will rather give character to their own laws. They will have as many and of such kind only as are agreeable to their views and inclinations. Hence the importance of early cultivation; of making the tree good, that its fruits may be good. We have the means adapted to this end, and the speaker will be indulged in urging the use and application of them.

To family instructions, schools, seminaries and institutions of public worship, we are indebted for most of the correct principles and habits we possess. By a careful attention to these institutions, the public morals may be preserved, and more order maintained in a community, than the best code of civil laws can produce. "A private family possesses all the rudiments of a commonwealth." There instructions are given, and wholesome laws administered. The seeds of knowledge and virtue are sown early in the mind, and a spirit of due subordination cultivated. Rightful authority meets with a ready and cheerful obedience, and government and order are maintained with grace and dignity. From such private instructions, children are advanced to schools, where they are kept under tutors and governors, to perfect the good work begun in them. Into these fountains the salt of wisdom should be cast, that the minds of youth may be enlarged, their hearts rectified, and their manners refined. The good effects of such early cultivation will seldom be lost: they will be seen in individuals, and enjoyed by society. From these nurseries of knowledge and useful accomplishments, our brightest hopes are drawn. They will supply us with enlightened and virtuous citi-

gens by whom a free government, may be supported from age to age; especially if from these early instructions they resort to the school of Christ, constantly kept open for improving the citizen and perfecting the saint. To this sanctuary we are invited by all the interests that are dear to us for time and eternity.

If the worship of God be binding on one man, it is binding on all men. If piety be profitable to an individual, it must be profitable to a community or nation. The Lord knoweth his own heritage. The religious character of a people will ever mark them out for the protection of that Almighty Being who presides over the destinies of nations.

Though men differ from each other in modes of faith and worship; yet so liberal are the provisions here made for them, that every individual may unite his private judgment with his public duty. By the principles of our Constitution, a union of church and state, which has been productive of so much evil in the world, is barred. The civil authority has no interference with or control over the principles, rules and regulations of the church. It only protects it in the peaceful enjoyment of its own privileges. Nor has the church any influence or control over the civil authorities. Our social compact secures to protestant Christians of all denominations, equal rights and privileges, civil and religious; and gives perfect toleration to religion in all its forms. In this land of liberty a persecuting arm can have no strength.

Our Constitution might as well have been silent, as to have said less on this important subject—and it is strange that its mild requirements of religious instruction only, should have alarmed the fears of any of our good citizens, or raised opposition to it. But there are those who imagine that civil government and religion can never come into *any* alliance with safety, and to keep them entirely separate, is the way to preserve them both pure; that the one needs not the aid and support of the other; that both appear in their greatest beauty and strength, when they stand independent on each other; that *that*

must be a poor religion, indeed, and unworthy of the faith and confidence of men, which any way owes its support and preservation to civil authority ; that it always did, and always will flourish best when left to itself.

There is more of declamation, than of reasoning and solid truth in all this.

If civil government and religious principles and worship cannot exist together, then the one or the other must go out of the world.

Must we then leave our religion and all concerns for it as a people, when we form ourselves into civil society for our greater security and happiness ? or shall we take it with us ? And where is the difference between our paying a thoughtful attention to it in our individual, and in our associate capacity, when we are the same citizens, and virtually the same men in both cases ? Revealed religion, strictly speaking, never was left to itself. The Christian faith and doctrines first came by hearing. They were taught before they were received and practised. They were committed to us to be kept, and not to be abandoned, and they have hitherto been preserved in the world, by means resembling those by which they were at first introduced and established. It is true, the persons who first propagated the true religion, were raised up and sent by God, and were not called by men ; and that it made its entrance and progress in the world, not by any aid of the civil authority (then mostly heathen) but against it. And Christianity no more depends on any human device or authority for its truth now, than when it first made its appearance among men. No legislative provisions can add to, or diminish its important doctrines. It stands upon its own evidence, and will continue to exist, when those who neglect and abuse it are dead, and their condition decided by its sentence. But because Jewish doctors and heathen magistrates once opposed it, must a government in the hand of Christians neglect it ? Let it be remembered that it is not religion, as a reality, that we are concerned for ; but that men



should be instructed in religion, and this is an object not unworthy the care and attention of those who are intrusted with our civil concerns. The assembling of ourselves together for the exercises of religion, produces in us sentiments and feelings friendly to social order. The acts of homage and worship we pay to one Supreme Being, on whom we all depend, place the worshippers much on a level, excite in them a common sympathy and fellow-feeling, and give them an interest in each other's well-being and happiness. The bonds of civil and Christian union are hereby strengthened, and men are renewed in their natures day by day. What patriot, what Christian, would not encourage these institutions by all his rightful authority, and enforce them by his steady example?

Desert them, and you lose all their blessed effects. Suffer the lights in these golden candlesticks to go out, and darkness would soon cover the land, and gross darkness the people. By these privations, much the same changes would be made in the moral, as will be caused in the natural world, when the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall withdraw her light, and all the stars shall fall from heaven.

Among the duties of rulers and citizens, is that of preserving inviolate the union of the States. A State stands in the same relation and owes the same duties to the Federal Government, that an individual citizen owes to his own State. The Congress is the head, the States are the members, of this great political body: And while the head presides over the members, and guarantees to every State a republican form of government, the States respectively are under obligation to support the head, and to unite their influence in guarding the whole body from schism.

Our interests are so linked and combined, so dependent are the members one upon another, and each member on the whole, that a union among them is life; a division would be death to the body. Should the work of separation once begin, who can calculate with certainty

where and in what it would end? One division would probably lead to another. Those who had seceded might not remain united among themselves. Possessing still the spirit of disaffection and the seeds of disunion, feuds and animosities would probably spring up afresh, and destructive wars among themselves might ensue.

If Scotland and England, when two distinct kingdoms, were involved in ruinous wars; if they could not be at peace with each other, nor yet formidable to a foreign enemy; what must be the situation of this nation, if once divided? When evils and privations are felt from abroad, and discontent prevails at home, a union among ourselves cannot be urged with too much warmth and energy. Our National Government was consented to and adopted by a compromise of jarring interests; it must be supported on the same principle. Our deep-rooted prejudices should be stifled and corrected, and our local interests yielded to the public good. We shall gain more by the sacrifice than we can lose. A spirit of jealousy and rivalry among ourselves, and of discontent with our own condition and our own doings, lay us open to the artful intrigues of our enemies abroad, who will not fail to turn them to their own advantage. We have, no doubt, had emissaries among us from Cobbett the printer, to Henry the spy, who give to their employers correct information on the state of parties and interests in this nation; and of the course which things are most likely to take. They would gladly alienate us from the government under which we live, and attach us to their own.

It is among the wily schemes of European nations first to divide the people they have marked out as the victims of their policy and power, in order to make the future conquest of them the more easy.

However we may divide about men and measures among ourselves, no true American will admit the interference of a third party from abroad, nor suffer the affairs of his own nation to be distracted by any foreign influence.

Would the American nation present itself to Great Britain a solid and *united column*, she could no longer calculate her policy on divisions here, nor pursue oppressive measures in hopes that we should accomplish among ourselves what she knows she cannot effect by her own power.

Insults and injuries have been heaped upon us. That negotiation has not succeeded is not owing to ourselves. We have made arrangements, and been grievously disappointed in not seeing them carried into effect. We have remonstrated in vain. The cup of reconciliation has been exhausted. We are convinced by experience, that in obstinate cases policy is ineffectual without power. What is a resolve or newspaper proclamation before the mouth of a cannon?

In the course of insults and injuries repeated and persisted in, it is with nations as with individuals, that there is a point in which forbearance ends, and resistance begins. To that point we have been *driven*, and we ought to make a stand.

America has not been assuming in her attitude, nor imperious in her demands. She boasts not of her strength, nor does she fear from her weakness. Awaken her spirit, and she will gird herself with sufficient majesty and strength to repel aggressions, and vindicate her own rights. Nothing is wanting to her success and triumph, but a spirit of union, and this will grow out of her oppressions and dangers.

The cry that poverty and ruin are in train, and will overtake us in our course, may alarm and dishearten the weak and avaricious, but on sound and inflexible minds it will make no such impressions. Poverty has not her residence in America. Plenty has driven her from this land, and forbidden her returning to it. We are rich in resources of which our enemy cannot deprive us. If all the other nations were swept from the earth, we could still draw from our own resources all the necessaries, and many of the conveniencies and luxuries of life. We contend not for commerce on the plea that it is necessary

to our existence, but because it is our right; and by using it, our wealth is much increased, and the conveniencies and luxuries of life greatly multiplied to us. It gives employment to many who are bred only to the seas, and are unskilful in other business; and to as many or more whose early education and plans for life were formed with a view to merchandize. To relinquish it then, would be to change the habits and pursuits of a large and respectable portion of the community. The votaries of commerce, therefore, will never want for advocates in this nation, to stand by, and not desert them, till the seas are opened, and they can navigate them in peace and security.

Privations we have long felt, and shall continue to feel, while a commercial intercourse between this and the European nations shall be interrupted or suspended; but the same evils will be more severely felt by those who provoked the contest between us.

Every nation should know its own resources, and how to avail itself of its natural advantages as well as of its strength. When commercial restrictions are resorted to with a view to act on the interests, and not on the physical strength of nations, that nation would be most likely first to be weary and seek an accommodation which was most dependent on the other for the necessaries of life. If such an experiment were to be fairly made, this nation would have nothing to fear from the result. Place a loaf of bread by the side of a gewgaw, and see towards which the hand of hunger would first be stretched out.

America may be called the granary of the world; and but for her supplies, distress and famine would be felt by her enemy. Whilst we abound in raw materials and articles of first necessity, she may find herself encumbered with her own manufactures of no particular use to her till exchanged for the necessaries of life. This consideration ought to attach us to our own country, convince us of our relative importance, and embolden us in the defence of our rights.

To Congress we have confided the important question of war and peace. The power of the nation is rightfully vested in them. Their will, deliberately expressed, is law, and on their constituents devolves the duty of carrying the same into effect. On uniting with them, depends the existence of the government, and the energy of its laws. Did we vest our rulers with power only to oppose and prevent their using it? Shall we palsy the body politic, or shall we impart life to it? Knowing the nature of the government we have adopted, let us guard it against its weakest points.

Our frequent elections, which secure the people against tyranny and oppression, expose the government to frequent changes, and may prevent a fair and full experiment of any system of measures however wise and good. In times of contention and division, when measures are put in train by the rightful authority, some counter project may be started by their political opponents, and a new set of men brought forward to carry them into effect, whose schemes, in their turn, may meet the same fate by those who shall next succeed them. Such changes might be tolerable in a time of peace, when nothing but our internal regulations were affected by them, but they must put a nation in an awkward and dangerous situation in a time of war, and give an enemy a great advantage over it.

As a further argument to union among ourselves, permit me to add, that we are now the only republic on earth, and the last experiment is probably making here whether such a government can exist with men or not.

The bodies of all the ancient republics being dissolved, her spirit has fled to this land, and we trust has taken up her settled abode among us. She is here like Noah's dove in the ark amidst the deluge around us. Send her forth in this tempestuous season, and she would find no rest for the sole of her foot; but would return and hover around us, without bringing even the olive leaf in her mouth.

In addressing the constituted authorities present, a tribute of respect is due to the venerable patriot and sage who has lately presided over this Commonwealth. A long life devoted to the best interests of his country, during the perils of the revolutionary war, to the establishment of its independence, and the many important services he has since rendered to this nation, at home and abroad, will embalm his memory, and make it precious to future ages. In his respite from public labors, he will enjoy our best wishes for his future happiness, honor and usefulness in the world.

The two branches of the Legislature will not be unmindful of the respect and confidence manifested towards them by their constituents, when they committed to their trust their dearest rights and interests: That instead of being called to the degrading service of governing by mere force a body of slaves, they have the peculiar honor of directing the affairs of freemen: That in order to hold a dignified authority over their constituents, and merit their esteem, it is necessary to be temperate in their discussions, cool in their deliberations, and to direct their measures to the public good.

Happy would it be for Legislators, and for the Commonwealth, if the rancorous spirit of party could be banished from within the walls of the Legislature, and never enter there to influence debate, bias the mind, or pervert the judgment.

When parties are engaged in playing off their strength against each other, and contending for victory; when it is the test of political virtue and fidelity to unite in nothing, but divide in every thing whether of a political nature or not; the public interests are in danger of being overlooked and neglected, and the people will not derive that benefit from their rulers which they have a right to expect. As knowledge and virtue among the citizens form the solid basis of a republican government, the political fathers of this Commonwealth will not neglect to patronize the sciences, to require that schools be established in all its borders, so that education may be as equal as possible,

and the whole body politic be filled with light. The people will then most probably use their liberty without abusing it: and the freedom purchased and bequeathed by our ancestors, will not be found among their descendants like a prize in the hands of fools.

The University at Cambridge, restored to its primitive foundation, merits the unremitting and nursing attention of the Legislature. It is one of the principal lights and ornaments in our political building. Such a patriotic and dignified discharge of the public duties, will evince to all men, that there is no film on the eye, nor disease in the head, of ~~the political~~ body. *politic*

The peculiar aspect and character of the times induce me to address a few remarks to this numerous assembly.

The duties we all owe to our civil rulers are undoubtedly understood; and but for the prejudices and feelings excited among us would be more honorably discharged. There is an honor due to magistrates, and whenever it is withheld, and they are calumniated and abused, government is not only weakened, but nearly prostrated. The sin is extensive in its nature, and ruinous in its effects. He that dishonors the head, dishonors also the whole body. Jude, the servant of Christ, has given such a character to those who speak evil of dignities, that I had rather refer the hearer to his description of it than to recite his words.

As fellow citizens and members of the same body, we owe each other civility and kindness, and should cherish a spirit of social intercourse.

No man should be hated or persecuted for his opinions. Slander and abuse are not the fit means of making men better. The experiment has long been tried without any good effect.

Had the means been adapted to the end, they have been sufficiently plied to have convinced and converted the greatest political sinner among us.

Party spirit which is now raging, is a merciless enemy; whom it will it kills, and whom it will it saves alive; or

if it spare the man, it will be <sup>sure</sup> ~~seen~~ to murder his reputation. It not only robs us of justice, but does violence to nature herself. It is among us the dividing line between human perfection on the one hand, and total depravity on the other. So capricious, arbitrary and wicked a spirit deserves the reprobation of every good man; and we should save ourselves and others from its power, and from the injuries it inflicts. Why should brethren, whose reputation and happiness are mutually dear, and whose interests are much the same, do such wrongs one to another?

What fruits have we in those things whereof we are secretly mortified and ashamed? In such a temper and condition it is painful to live, and dangerous to die. We are loudly admonished of the necessity of a better temper and life.

In the mind of the speaker there is of late an extraordinary occurrence of events taking place in the natural and moral world. The seasons appear to have deviated from their usual order. They change from one extreme to another. The world is in an unusual commotion, not merely in one place, but every where. The convulsion is universal. We hear of wars and rumors of wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. They seem to presage that the end of all things is at hand.

Let every one take heed, lest, when his Lord comes, he shall find him smiting and abusing his fellow servant. For the Lord of that servant shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites.

*FINIS.*









